

# Preparing the Garden for Winter



Presented by: Master Gardener Julie Pfankuch



- Fall Garden Clean Up
- Crop Rotation
- Vegetable Families
- Mulches
- Soil Testing
- Soil Amendments
- Lasagna Gardening



# *Fall Garden Clean Up*

- Remove any diseased or dead plants from garden area.
- Do not till soil - let it rest until spring.
- Fall is a good time to have a soil test done to see what nutrients are depleted and need to be replenished.
- On top of bed, lay down layers of organic material. Hay, straw, chopped leaves, well-aged manures
- Water well, but not soaking wet.
- Lightly water occasionally in winter when temps are above 40' F.

# *Crop Rotation*

- Rotate crops every year
- A crop should not be planted in the same spot as a plant from same family year after year
- Decreases pest and disease problems in the soil
- Increases yield to rotate crops every year
- Plants that are related tend to have the same pest and disease problems

# *Vegetable Families*

The 2 families most susceptible to soil-borne diseases are the **mustard** and **nightshade** families.

Divide garden into 3 sections and rotate every year (mustard, nightshade and other)

## **Nightshade family**

Eggplant, potato, tomato, pepper



## **Mustard family**

Cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, kale, Brussels sprouts, turnip, mustard greens, rutabaga, radish, horseradish, collars, kohlrabi, Chinese cabbage

# *Mulches for Vegetable Beds*

- **Wood or Bark chips**  
Not recommended for vegetable beds
- **Newspapers (non glossy pages)**  
Use between rows, cover with grass clippings or mulch
- **Straw**  
Use weed and seed free only  
Look for those certified weed and seed free  
Till into soil in fall to help amend soil
- **Grass Clippings**  
Apply in thin layers (1/4" thick), drying between layers to prevent matting and stink

Use only herbicide free



# Soil Testing

## Home Test

- Gives a general idea of soil conditions, but not very accurate

- Inexpensive (~ \$3)

Contact local County Extension office for more precise testing

- ~ \$25-\$35 for a soil test



# Soil Amendments

- **Compost**  
Home-made or store bought  
Peat/sheep manure  
Watch out for cow manure - can be high in salts (urea)  
Mushroom compost - my favorite!
- **Well-aged manures**  
Make friends with a farmer  
Well-aged manure kills pathogens as decomposes
- **Sphagnum peat moss**  
Use sparingly  
Don't use Mountain peat - endangered
- **Leaf Mold**  
Excellent source - ask your neighbors for it!  
Easy to make yourself:  
Chop up leaves into small pieces, bag, throw in N fertilizer, poke holes in bag, water in well, keep moist, turn once a month and in spring, GOLD!





# *How to Apply Soil Amendments*

Cover with at least 2" deep throughout garden area

Till into depth of 4"

Repeat every spring

❖ How do you know when you have healthy soil?

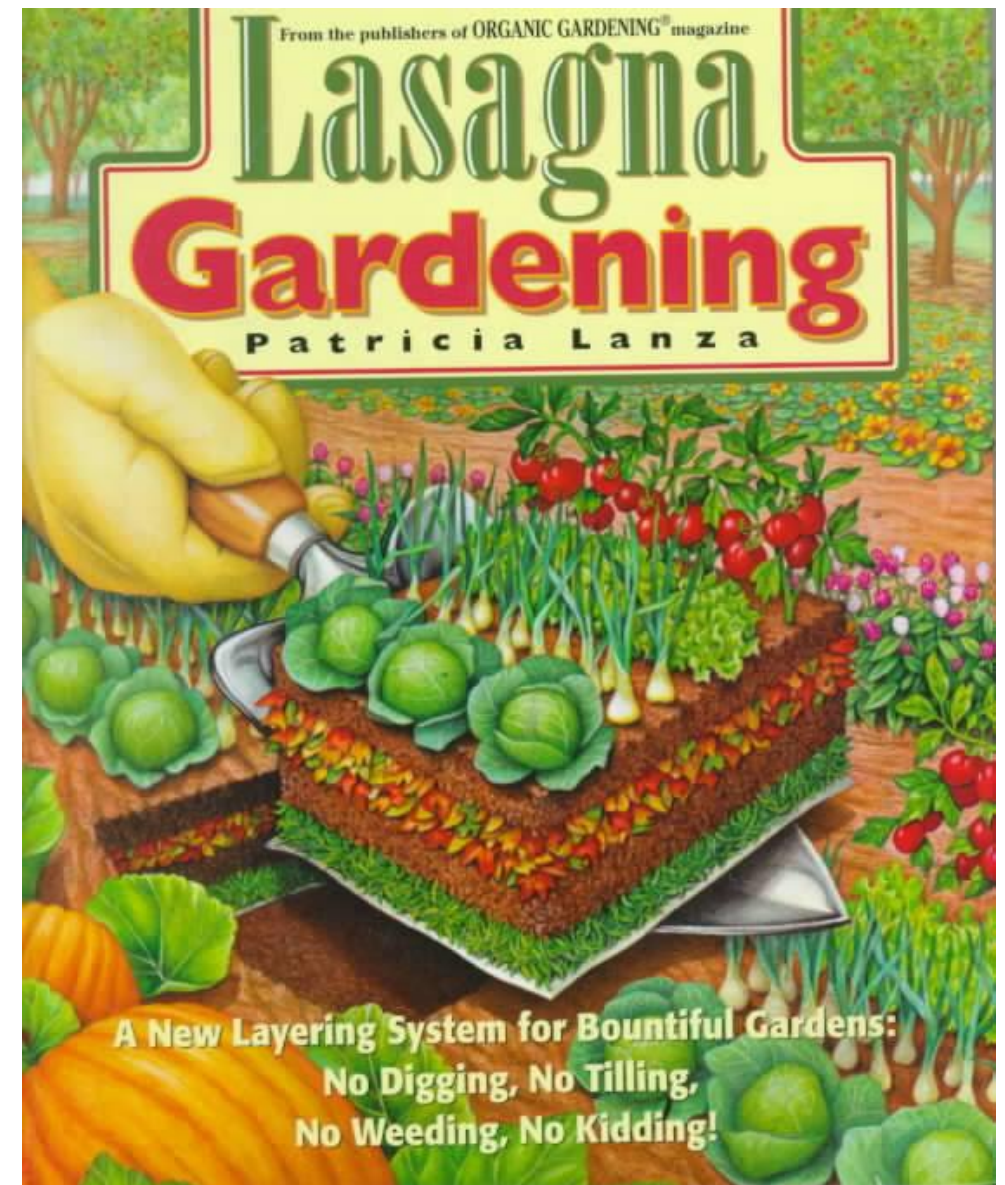
–Lots of Earthworms!

–Everywhere!



# *Lasagna Gardening*

- Layer organic materials in fall
- Water well
- Let Mother Nature decompose the materials over the winter
- In spring, till soil lightly
- Ready to plant







# *Questions?*

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